Planning, programming and strategising for changes and innovations in the educati...

PLANNING, PROGRAMMING AND STRATEGISING FOR CHANGES AND INNOVATIONS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIESBYPROFESSOR KAYODE ALAOANDDR.

(MRS.) MODUPE ADELABUFACULTY OF EDUCATIONOBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITYILE-IFE, NIGERIAAT THE 3RD VITTACHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RETHINKING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE 1ST ??" 5TH JULY 2006IFRANE, MOROCCOABSTRACTThis paper is premised on a deep conviction that the educational systems of Developing Countries are not responding fast enough to the rapid changes of an increasingly Globalised and technology-driven World Economy. Most developing counties in Africa are perhaps yet to appreciate the need for widespread urgent changes and innovations in their educational systems in response to rapid changes of Globalisation. Regrettably, most developing countries in Africa have embarked on various programmes of reforms in sectors outside their educational system.

Such programmes of reforms should ideally be preceded by reforms in the school systems that service other sectors. This paper intends to start the process of filling this gap. Hence the presentation of proposals on how to plan, programme and effectively strategise for widespread changes and innovations in the educational systems of Developing Countries in Africa in order not to be left behind by a world that is always on the move. This paper presents exploratory blueprint on how developing countries could plan, programme and strategise for needed changes in their educational systems in responses to changing needs of a Globalised technology-driven World

Economy. Widespread Education reforms are needed urgently in Africa. Africa may be left behind permanently by the rest of the world. Africa should plan, programme and strategise to prevent this avoidable impending disaster. This seems to be the goal of this study.

INTRODUCTIONThis paper examines issues related to planning, programming and strategizing for changes and innovations in the educational systems of developing countries, using Nigeria as a case study. This paper is premised on the fundamental assumption that change and innovation are the most needed ingredients for educational system of developing countries. To say the least, the school of systems of most developing countries are perhaps several steps behind time and behind civilization. The need for changes and innovation should therefore be treated as a matter of urgency.

Most developing countries are post-colonial societies who inherited a colonial structure of education. The colonial structure of education was specifically designed to service the manpower needs of the colonial political and economic structure. Therefore, such education was colonial and white-collar in orientation as the colonial superstructure then needed civil servants and clerical staff for the colonial service.

Regrettably, most independent African countries failed to restructure the colonial system of education very many years after independence. According to Fullan 1982, even the Western countries did not understand how educational change works in practice except since about 1970. According to him, in the 1960s, Educators were busy developing and introducing reforms. In the 1970s they were busy failing at putting them into practice. Like a

double tragedy, most developing countries embarked on phenomenal educational expansion after independence and intensified this expansion without adjusting the orientation and curricular thrust of colonial education. On this premise, right from attainment of independence, the need for change and innovation had always been prevalent in the educational systems of developing countries. The works of Fafunwa (1967, 1974), confirm that changes and innovations were needed in Nigeria educational system after attainment of independence.

Some attempts were made especially in Nigeria, to reform the school system through the 6-3-3-4 educational system. This was the first time Nigeria attempted to carry out some reforms on the system of education inherited from former British colonial masters. However, poor implementation of the reforms inherent in the 6-3-3-4 system of education did not allow innovation and changes to have an appreciable impact on the Nigerian society.

However it is difficult to talk about implementation without considering the planning process. The history of education in Nigeria and other developing countries, is the history of a system that was denied the opportunity of changes and innovations as at when due. Regrettably, superimposed on this history was the wave of changes and innovation imposed on the educational system by the trends and characteristics of globalization.

As expected, the educational systems of developing countries could not respond adequately to the rapid changes necessitated by an increasingly globalized and technology-driven world. The educational systems of most developing countries in general, and Nigeria in particular, are perhaps yet to

appreciate the need for rapid changes and innovations in their educational systems in response to the somewhat sporadic wave of changes associated with globalization. This paper seeks to highlight the changes and innovation arising out of the need to respond to trends and characteristics associated with globalization. The paper will also come up with proposals on how to plan, program and strategise in ensuring the institutionalization of change and innovation in the educational system of developing countries. Furthermore, it is imperative to examine the array of changes and innovation needed by the educational systems of developing countries, using Nigeria as an illustrative case study. Perhaps, from the works of educational researchers such as (Fafunwa 1967, 1974, 1971; Makinde 1986; Aluko 1986; Alao and Obilade 2000) the following layers of changes and innovations can be identified from the history of Nigerian education. These changes are: 1.

Changes and innovations that could have taken place to decolonize Nigerian educational system which were never done. 2. Changes that could have taken place due to the changing structure of post-colonial society, which were poorly implemented in the 6-3-3-4 system of education. 3. Changes that became imperative due to the trends and characteristics of globalization. Perhaps, these three layers of changes will be discussed into some details before we examine issues related to how to plan, programme and strategise on implementing these changes. 1.

Changes and Innovations that could have taken place to decolonize Nigerian educational system which were never done: Shortly after independence, sincere attempts would have been made to decolonize the educational

system. However, most newly independent African countries including Nigeria, left the colonial system of education inherited untouched for many years after independence. The school system continued to produce clerical manpower for a post-colonial society that was in dire need of industrial and economic development. Most school products in post-colonial societies are by and large occupational illiterates. Unemployment therefore became a necessary outcome for a society whose school system produced graduates ill-equipped for gainful employment. An urgent need for change and innovation in Nigerian education is major curricular re-orientation of the school system that would provide for the emergence of a new generation of Nigerian youths with appropriate skills and competencies necessary for raising a standard of living and material culture of Nigerian society. Obilade and Alao (2000) provided excellent proposals about how turn around the Nigerian educational system to achieve gainful employment for all school products.

2. Changes that could have taken place due to the changing structure of post-colonial society, which was poorly implemented in the 6-3-3-4 system of education: Some attempts were made at reforming the educational system inherited from the colonial masters. In 1983, Nigeria started the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, which sought to correct the structural imbalances in the colonial system of education. The changes embedded in the 6-3-3-4 system could not have the necessary impact on the Nigerian society because of factors associated with poor implementation and under funding that characterized the system.

So poor was the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system that Nigerian society perhaps never witnessed change in the quality of school products before and after the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. 3. Changes that became imperative due to the trends and characteristics of globalization: Contemporary realities such as trends and characteristics occasioned by globalization such as ascendancy of Information Technology, free market economy, privatization, and enthronement of democracy as a world-wide acceptable form of governance, cumulatively call for a fundamental paradigm shift in educational system of most countries. Globalization has implication for widespread systemic changes and innovations in all aspects of education, from curriculum to teacher preparation, institutional structures, school calendar and teacher certification.

Globalization should therefore be seen as a phenomenon behind widespread systemic changes needed in the school system of most countries. A globalized society equally needs a school system with a globalized orientation and focus. The school structure of a globalized society must involve a shift from mono-cultural approach to education to multi-cultural approach to education with attendant changes in school curricular and assessment policies. Equally, changes and innovations of a school system of our globalized environment must involve the emergence of elastic curricula models and educational policies which emphasise interdisciplinary courses, open-ended systems, inter-generational and inter-professional relationships, multi-culturalism and sustainability. The days of local schools may be over as all schools may need to have both local and global orientation simultaneously. Globalization has tended to dismantle geographical

boundaries between nations. School products either from developing or developed countries will have to compete in the global zone where all nations of the world have access due to the ascendancy of information and communication technology. The skills and competencies needed for survival in contemporary globalized world may be different from those needed in the era preceding globalization.

Survival in a globalized world perhaps call for school products to develop new skills and competencies. Such evolving generic skills and competencies include some of the following:(a)decision-making skills(b)problem-solving skills(c)autonomous-thinking skills(d)diffused-thinking skills(e)effective communication skills(f)computer-manipulation skills(g)interpersonal relation skills(h)independent and autonomous learning skills. Regrettably, most of these important skills are not consciously taught in the school system of most developing societies. Incidentally, these skills and competencies are the core skills needed for effective ??? operation??™ in the job market of globalized societies. To compound the situation, some developing countries are embarking on political and economic reforms without first thinking of embarking on reforms of their school system. Perhaps, one should ask the following questions: How can a society succeed in political reform without first allowing democracy to operate in her schools Similarly, how would privatization and free market economy succeed in a society which does not encourage her schools to teach industry and enterprise in youth Similarly, how would banking reform and anti-corruption crusade succeed in a society that does not teach moral education in her schools Answers to these rhetoric questions perhaps espouse the wisdom of allowing widespread reforms of

educational system to precede the introduction of reforms in the larger society.

Stakeholders in the educational industries should be more alive to their responsibilities of ensuring that schools are made responsive to evolving changes in the society. For too long, the education industry had been too slow to respond to advances in technology and other changes in the society. A globalized world calls for the re-invention of a new teaching profession whose ??? members??™ should be prepared to anticipate, accept and celebrate positive changes in school policies and practices to accommodate a constantly changing and evolving world.

PLANNING FOR CHANGESFor change to take place, a major factor is planning. For instance, Fullan, says that why most attempts at educational reforms fail, goes far beyond the identification of specific technical problems such as lack of good materials, ineffective in-service training, or minimal administrative support. In more fundamental, terms educational change fails partly because of the assumptions of planners.

Adequate planning must precede the implementation of all the educational innovation and changes. In most cases, it is at the planning stage that Educational change fails. This is because the assumption of policy makers is frequently hyper rational (Wise, 1977, 1979). Policy makers often think of what to be changed without taking into cognizance on how the change is to take place, i. e. how to work through a process of change.

Moreover, planning by policy makers often ignore those who are to implement the policies. Any leader who precludes others who are affected by the change is bound to fail. Any policy maker who wants plans to succeed must engage in cooperative planning. For instance, at the government level, policy makers must work with those who will execute the plan i. e.

public servants. At the school level, a principal must work with his teachers, the non instructional staff and even students to succeed, there must be constant communication between planners and implementers. One of the basic reasons while planning fails is that planners of change are unaware of the situations that implementers are facing, but with cooperative planning, whereby, goals are clearly stated together, implementation strategies set out together and evaluation procedures stated together success is possible.

In planning several factors should be considered. These are: the programme itself, the human resource factor i. e.

educational change should be a process of coming to grips with the multiple realities of people who are the main participants in implementing change. Other factors that are crucial are the material and financial resources that will make the accomplishment of any reform possible. Moreover one should also think of the service factor. In developing countries, planning for changes and innovation may have failed because of failure to go through the appropriate steps in planning.

Some of these basic steps are: ??? Need to define and understand the problems involved in terms of objectives, policies, procedures and

programmes.??? Gathering of information about the needed change or programme.??? Classification and Evaluation of any useful data that was gathered.??? Determination of a possible choice.??? Arrangement in sequence the implementation procedure??? Evaluation procedures should be put in place.

Perhaps three fundamental conditions are necessary before introduction of the changes and innovation suggested in this paper. These conditions are as stated by Jones (1951) who submitted that: The initiation of any new plan, whether it is supervised study, core curriculum or guidance requires careful preparation of the staff and should be undertaken only after changes are understood and generally accepted by teachers. It implies that after effective planning and preparation, there should be(a)a proper understanding of what should be done(b)an explicit and implicit acceptance of the plan(c)a genuine and committed sense of responsibility for putting the programme into operation.

The proposed changes and innovation for Nigerian education system must have a solid planning base so that the three basic goals of planning must have been realised before actual programme implementation commences. The planning stage could have three main components, namely:(a)Planning for public support and acceptance(b)Planning for services and infrastructures(c)Planning for resourcesIt is naturally difficult for human societies to accept changes and innovations easily. All efforts must be taken to ensure that there is broad-based public support and acceptance for all changes and innovation proposed in this paper. A lot of public enlightenment

may be needed to ensure that the Nigerian public and all important stakeholders in the education industry share a commitment for a successful implementation of necessary educational changes and innovations. Programming and Strategising for Educational Changes and InnovationsProgramming is the appropriate step to be taken after planning. in the light of the objectives of the needed change and innovation.

It is an attempt to operationalize what has been planned i. e. to translate into reality the planned-for changes. It involves the actual curricular changes the teaching of the various subjects, the personnel services among others. It is difficult to sell changes and innovations in any human setting. This is because education is such a field where rightly or wrongly most people claim expertise. The prevalence of education as a phenomenon that touches the lives of all and sundry implies that educational changes and innovations will arouse the attention and interests of majority of the citizenry. Therefore, broad-based public acceptability must precede the successful implementation of any education innovation.

Perhaps, educational changes and innovations are so imperative that developing African countries should evolve an African agenda which will mainstream and institutionalise educational innovations and changes into the logistics of educational policy-making and implementation in Africa. The political class in Africa may need to develop a strategy that will make periodic innovations and changes a permanent feature of educational policy-making and implementation in Africa. History of education in Africa had clearly demonstrated that Africa is slow in responding to appropriate

changes in matters relating to education and technology. Developing countries in Africa may never develop if Africa continues to fund and sustain educational system that is slow to respond to appropriate changes. The language of change and innovation should be the appropriate language of education in most developing countries of Africa. A basic strategy, if Africa is to become part of ??? education for all??™ project, is for governments of Africa to treat the need for educational innovation and changes as a matter of national emergency.

For illustration, majority of Nigerian teachers are computer illiterates in a globalized world where ICT (Information Technology) is as prevalent as the water we drink. Teaching and learning are still carried on without the use of technology in most African countries. The plight of education in developing countries is such that the need for changes and innovation should be treated as a national emergency in most countries. Another major strategy is for developing countries to solve the problem of funding and financing of education decisively, if necessary changes and innovations in education will be given a chance of survival. Poor funding of education is the root cause of most problems confronting the education industry in Africa. Developing countries should have the courage of spending the required UNESCO percentage of their national budgets on education. Besides, the politics of free-education should be replaced by the politics of quality education which involve financial contribution of all stakeholders in the education industry.

Education does not need to be entirely free for society that does not have the funds to sustain it. The financial involvement of parents may likely

involve commitment of parents to ensure good academic performance on the part of pupils. All proposals for education innovations and changes may never succeed without adequately handling the issue of funding of the education industry. CONCLUSIONIt is perhaps appropriate to conclude this paper by reiterating the major advantages and prospects that Nigeria and other developing countries will enjoy by successfully implementing educational innovations and changes in their societies.

The whole human society has suddenly become a global village which has tended to create an international free zone for ideas, services and goods. Boundaries between nations have disappeared and replaced by international free zone. Educational system whether of developed or developing countries, may now be subjected to the same universal international standard. Schools all over the world must therefore think and operate both locally and globally. Developing countries of Africa must not be left behind by the trends and characteristics of globalization and the attendant rapid march towards post modernism in all spheres of life. Developing countries of Africa must move with the rest of the world by introducing requisite educational changes and innovations. No society can move faster than the quality of her educational system. This perhaps is the central message of this paper.

REFERENCESAdaralegbe, A. (1969) Editor, ??? A Philosophy for Nigerian Education??™, Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Ltd. Alao, K. and Obilade, O. (2000) Vocationalising the Nigerian Education system: Prospects, Procedures and Problems. Ife Journal of Theory and Research in Education, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp.

1-10. Aluko, Sam (1986) Assessing New Education Policy. The Guardian. Callaway, A.

(1973) Creating Employment for Nigeria??™s School Leavers. The Quarterly Review of the Institute of Administration, University of Ife, Vol. III, No. 1. Fullan Micheal (1982) The Meaning of Educational Change, OISE Press/The Ontario Institute for Studies in EducationFafunwa, A. Babs (1967) New perspectives in African Education.

Ibadan: Macmillan & Co. (Nigerian) Ltd. Fafunwa A. Babs.

(1971) History of Nigerian Highr Education, Lagos Macmillan and Co. Nigeria Ltd. Fafunwa, A. Babs (1974) History of Education in Nigeria. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

Jones, A. J. (1951) Principles of Guidance New York MacGraw Hill Book Company Inc. Makinde, Olu (1986) Educational for Work: Implications of the 6-3-3-4 System for Guidance and Counsellors and School Educators.

Nigerian Journal of Counselling and Development, Vol. 1, No. 1. Scrivasta, A.

K. (1971) Anxiety Pertaining to Job Life: A Universal Psychological Problem of the Modern Age. London Journal of Social Work, Vol. 38, 149-155.

Wise, A (1977) Why Educational Polices Often Fail: The Hyperrationalisation Hypothesis. Curriculum Studies, 9 (1) 43-57. Wise, A. (1979) Legislated Learning. Berkeley: University of California Press.